



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Saturday, April 22nd. Still at Camp David; cold, rainy, heavy cloud-layer day.

The President called me over to Aspen about 11:30 for about three hours. He had a fire going in his study, and he got into the question on details of the Russian trip. He gave me a lot of instructions for Chapin on taking some very firm positions on the things that we want to do, such as using our car, using our plane, going to Leningrad on Saturday, not on Sunday. The President's convinced that the Soviets are pushing for Sunday in order to avoid the President getting a good crowd there, etcetera, and so on. I covered that by cable with Chapin.

The main area of concern was Kissinger's trip and the general Vietnam situation and plans for the TV follow-up next week. He's concerned about the effect of Kissinger's trip, whether the people in this country will think he's there because the Russians are pressing us and that this is a sign of weakness or not. He feels that we can't show any overt weakness on our part, and he called Haig several times during our meeting, each time emphasizing the importance of maintaining our bombing and other attack levels. He's especially concerned about the effect on our people, the hawks, who are now enthusiastic, but could be turned off pretty rapidly if, as a result of Henry's trip, we backed off. He says that Henry has to make clear that if the May 2nd meeting is not conclusive...

DECLASSIFIED - E.O. 13526, Sect. 3.4: by MS, NARA, June 12, 2013
Audio Cassette 20, Side B, Withdrawn Item Number 27 [AC-20(B) Sel]
Duration: 21 seconds

...we'll hit Hanoi and Haiphong for 3 days running. He also told Haig to have Henry hit Gromyko on the downgrading of the trip from a state visit to a summit meeting and to demand that he change that.



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Part of our plan here is Kissinger's unbelievable ego, in that he's really pushing to have the President announce his Moscow trip and make a big thing out of it. Also, apparently he hasn't followed instructions from the President as to what he's to be negotiating. He's spending his time on the Soviet Summit agenda rather than on getting Vietnam settled, and the President was clearly disturbed by the information he had received from Henry last night. He waited all day and into the evening for a message today, and the last I'd heard, it still hadn't come. It now appears that Henry won't come back until Monday, which is again the ego thing, because he was determined to have a three day meeting and he's managed to do it.

The President then made the point that he's basically decided not to have a press conference next week, but rather to go on television for a Vietnam announcement, where he would cover the troop withdrawal question, some follow-up on Kissinger's trip to Moscow, explain why we're doing the bombing, a...

[End of tape reel AC-20(B)]

[Begin tape reel AC-21(A)]

Continuing Saturday, April 22nd; talking about the point of the President's announcement plans re: Vietnam. His feeling being that he's got to explain the background of what's been going on, and all, in an uncluttered atmosphere of a speech rather than of a press conference. He had first told me to have Safire try a draft of the speech, but then later decided not to. That he'd write it



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

himself, but he wants Buchanan to prepare a 500 word opening statement, purportedly for the press conference. In that, he wants to review what happened: that they massively invaded with Russian tanks, what, that our reaction was to respond, especially why we couldn't bug out, building up Agnew's line but cool down some, say that the South Vietnamese are fighting hard, and well that we'll stop the bombing when they stop the invasion of the South. And any other good points that the President could mention. In other words, this would be a progress report on Vietnam: why we bombed, snap back at the critics, thank the American people for their support, but without the antagonism of the press conference. He told me to tell Haig what his plan was, which would be first to announce Kissinger's trip on Tuesday, and then the President go on TV Wednesday night, make the troop announcement, and the plenary session announcement. He told me, as I said, to have Haig hold that up, but Haig says he can't. He then wanted Haig to come up this afternoon and talk with him, but Haig had other plans, so he's coming up tomorrow.

He expressed some concern about the general foreign policy PR, making the point that Haig had told him about some very interesting intelligence data that would be good propaganda, but that nobody's taking any initiative to put out. He obviously pondered this, because he called me later in the evening to say that he'd been thinking about that, and had decided that I would have to take over that foreign policy PR responsibility, and that he wanted to talk to Ehrlichman and me about it at 9:00 tomorrow morning.

I asked him at the meeting about the Connally situation. He said Connally had agreed to do his withdrawal in sort of two steps. First, he would say that he has no plans, when he resigns, he would say that he has no plans for any political activity that the President has his personal support and that of his wife. Second, he would wait till after the Democratic Convention and then come out, blast the Democrats, and announce that he was heading up the Democrats for Nixon. The President said he went through again his line with Connally, that he thought he was the only



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

man who could be President, and that led us back to a discussion we had started with Ehrlichman yesterday on the restructuring of the two-party system. The feeling being that the President and Connally, after the election, could move to build a new party, the Independent Conservative Party, or something of that sort, that would bring in a coalition of Southern Democrats and other conservative Democrats, along with the middle road to conservative Republicans. The problem here would be to work it out so that we included Rockefeller and Reagan on the Republican spectrum, and picked up as many of the Democrats as we could. By structuring it right, we could develop a new majority party under a new name, get control of the Congress without an election, simply by the realignment, and make a truly historic change in the entire American political structure. This intrigues the President and Connally, and it's obviously the only way Connally has any future, since he's never going to be nominated by the Democratic Party, and by leaving now he loses much chance of ever being nominated by the Republican Party. If we formed the coalition, with the two of them being the strong men in doing it, he clearly would emerge as the candidate for the new party in '76, and the President would strongly back him in that.

End of April 22nd.